

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
USMISSION SINAI
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 6835

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EG
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN NAVAL EXERCISES

REF: CAIRO 6533

1. BANNER-HEADLINED FEATURE STORY WITH PHOTOS IN BOTH
GUMHIRIYYA AND AKHBAR APRIL 22 IS LIVE-AMMUNITION NAVAL
EXERCISE HELD IN RED SEA BY EGYPTIAN NAVY AND COASTAL
DEFENSE FORCES. DAILIES REPORT THAT FOUR-HOUR EXERCISE,
ATTENDED BY DEPRIMIN/MINWAR GAMASY, NAVY COMMANDER ASHRAF
REFAAT, AND RED SEA MILITARY ZONE COMMANDER AHMAD MURAD
KAMIL, WAS LARGE-SCALE AFFAIR WITH "DESTROYERS, MINE-SWEEPERS,
MISSILE AND TORPEDO BOATS" PARTICIPATING. ARTICLE NOTE
THAT GAMASY HAS SPENT PAST THREE DAYS IN RED SEA ZONE,
VISITING ADVANCED POSITIONS AND EXPLAINING RECENT POLITICAL
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DEVELOPMENTS TO COMMANDERS, OFFICER, AND TROOPS.

2. COMMENT: DAO NOTES THAT LIMITED SCALE NAVAL EXERCISE
IN RED SEA SCARCELY JUSTIFIES BALLYHOO THAT GAMASY AND NAVAL
FORCES RECEIVING IN LOCAL PRESS SINCE RED SEA FLEET COM-
BATANTS LIMITED TO ONE DESTROYER, ONE OR TWO SUBMARINES AND
A HANDFUL OF MISSILE BOATS, TORPEDO CRAFT AND PATROL BOATS.

NAVAL EXERCISES, AND PREVIOUS AIR FORCES EXERCISES (REFTEL), MAY HAVE ORIGINALLY BEEN SCHEDULED AS RESPONSE TO ISRAELI MANEUVERS IN SINAI, ALTHOUGH PUBLICITY SURROUNDING EGYPTIAN MANEUVERS IN THE MAIN NOT DIRECTED AT ISRAEL. WHILE AIR FORCE EXERCISES WIDELY INTERPRETED HERE AS WARNING TO QADHAFI, NAVAL EXERCISES APPEAR RELATED TO SUDAN AND RED SEA SECURITY. DAILIES NOTE THAT NUMAYRI CURRENTLY IN SAUDI ARABIA FOR TALKS WITH PRINCE FAHD AND THERE HAS BEEN DAILY COVERAGE OF MEETING, SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 23, BETWEEN EGYPTIAN AND SUDANESE CHIEFS OF STAFF.

3. WHAT IS MOST STRIKING IS NOT FACT OF AIR AND NAVAL MANEUVERS, BUT HIGHLY UNUSUAL PUBLICITY THEY HAVE RECEIVED, ALMOST CERTAINLY ON DIRECT INSTRUCTION FROM FONMIN FAHMY. OUR GUESS IS THAT GOE ATTEMPTING TO CONVEY IMPRESSION THAT EGYPT IS MILITARILY STRONG AND PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES IT PERCEIVES EMANATING FROM LIBYA, ETHIOPIA AND ISRAEL, FOR THE TIME BEING IN THAT ORDER OF IMPORTANCE. EILTS

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